

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05  
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02  
SS-15 ICA-11 HA-05 PC-01 AID-05 /100 W  
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R 221801Z MAY 78  
FM AMEMBASSY BONN  
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INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA  
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA  
AMEMBASSY GABORONE  
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO  
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM  
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 09356

CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, SREF, WA, GW  
SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: WHAT HAPPENS TO THE ETHNIC GERMANS?

SUMMARY: LATEST FOREIGN OFFICE ESTIMATES SHOW  
APPROXIMATELY 18,000 ETHNIC GERMANS STILL RESIDENT  
IN NAMIBIA. OF THESE, 6,500 CARRY GERMAN PASSPORTS,  
1,500 CLAIM DUAL NATIONALITY, AND THE REMAINDER HAVE  
ONLY SOUTH AFRICAN TRAVEL DOCUMENTS. IN AN EFFORT TO  
PROVIDE FOR THE WELFARE OF THOSE WHO WISH TO  
LEAVE NAMIBIA, THE FOREIGN OFFICE IS WORKING ON AN  
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE BY WHICH THOSE WHO CAN PROVE  
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THEIR GERMAN HERITAGE CAN BE ISSUED PASSPORTS. UPON  
RETURN TO THE FRG, THESE INDIVIDUALS WOULD NOT BE  
CONSIDERED REFUGEES BUT, INSTEAD, NORMAL GERMAN  
CITIZENS WHO WOULD BE ENTITLED TO DRAW UPON UNEMPLOYMENT  
AND OTHER SOCIAL BENEFITS TO EASE THEIR TRANSITION.  
END SUMMARY.

1. OF ALL THE ISSUES INHERENT IN THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN SITUATION, THE ONE WITH THE GREATEST POTENTIAL FOR DOMESTIC POLITICAL FALLOUT IN THE FRG IS THE FATE OF THE ETHNIC GERMANS STILL RESIDENT IN NAMIBIA. OUR COMPREHENSIVE REPORT ON THE BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM (76 BONN 19010) STILL APPLIES; SINCE THAT TIME, VERY LITTLE HAS CHANGED. THE CONSERVATIVES (CDU/CSU) CONTINUE TO USE THE ETHNIC GERMAN POPULATION AS A FOCUS FOR THEIR CRITICISM OF THE FRG'S SOUTHERN AFRICAN POLICY, ACCUSING IT OF GIVING IN TO THE MARXIST LIBERATION MOVEMENTS AND ABANDONING FELLOW GERMANS IN THE PROCESS. ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FENCE HAVE BEEN THE LIBERAL SPOKESMEN (GENERALLY SPD), WHO ARGUE THAT THE FRG SHOULD ENCOURAGE ETHNIC GERMANS TO RETURN SINCE THEY ARE ALLEGEDLY AMONG THE MORE RECALCITRANT SUPPORTERS OF RACISM IN THE FORMER GERMAN COLONY. THE OFFICIAL FRG POSITION, GUIDED BY FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER, IS TO ENCOURAGE THE ETHNIC GERMANS TO REMAIN AND TO CONTRIBUTE TO A PEACEFUL EVOLUTION TOWARD A STABLE AND INDEPENDENT NAMIBIA.

2. UNTIL RECENTLY, THE DEBATE HAD AN UNCERTAIN QUALITY TO IT, SINCE THERE WERE NO RELIABLE FIGURES ON HOW MANY ETHNIC GERMANS ARE ACTUALLY RESIDENT IN NAMIBIA. (THE FRG, LIKE THE US, HAS NO REGISTRATION REQUIREMENT FOR ITS NATIONALS LIVING OVERSEAS.) ESTIMATES RANGED  
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BETWEEN 15,000 AND 30,000.

. IN AN

EFFORT TO CORRECT THIS DEFICIENCY, THE FOREIGN OFFICE MADE A CONCERTED EFFORT TO GET A FIX ON THE TOTAL NUMBER OF ETHNIC GERMANS STILL IN NAMIBIA BEFORE CLOSING DOWN ITS CONSULATE IN WINDHOEK IN OCTOBER 1977. THE CONSULATE SUCCEEDED IN IDENTIFYING 18,000 PEOPLE WITH EITHER GERMAN NATIONALITY OR A CLAIM TO IT. OF THESE, 6,500 HOLD GERMAN PASSPORTS EXCLUSIVELY, AND 1,500 MAINTAIN DUAL NATIONALITY, USUALLY SOUTH AFRICAN AND GERMAN. THERE ARE, ACCORDING TO THE FRG'S COUNT, ABOUT 10,000 PEOPLE IN NAMIBIA WHO HAVE RENOUNCED THEIR GERMAN CITIZENSHIP IN FAVOR OF SOUTH AFRICAN, BUT WHO WERE BORN IN GERMANY, OR HAD PARENTS WHO WERE.

3. THE FRG IS VERY AWARE OF ITS MORAL OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE A HAVEN FOR THOSE ETHNIC GERMANS WHO MIGHT WISH TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMELAND. STANDING PRACTICE OF RECEIVING ETHNIC GERMANS FROM EASTERN EUROPE ALLOWS NO OTHER POLITICALLY DEFENSIBLE CHOICE. HOWEVER, OBJECTIONS HAVE BEEN RAISED AGAINST CONSIDERING THOSE FLEEING NAMIBIA AS POLITICAL REFUGEES IN THE EAST

EUROPEAN SENSE OF THE WORD. NEVERTHELESS, IT  
HAS BEEN CLEAR FOR SOME TIME THAT SOME PROVISION  
FOR THESE PEOPLE WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE.

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4. OUR CONTACTS IN THE FOREIGN OFFICE CONFIRM THAT  
THEY HAVE BEEN WRESTLING WITH THIS PROBLEM IN RECENT  
MONTHS ON GENSCHER'S ORDERS AND THAT THEY THINK  
THEY HAVE A WORKABLE SOLUTION. THE FRG CABINET HAS  
ALREADY APPROVED THE PLAN AND IT IS NOW BEFORE THE  
LAENDER--STATES --FOR FINAL APPROVAL. (ACCORDING TO THE  
GERMAN CONSTITUTION, THE LAENDER--STATES--RETAIN  
RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUCH IMMIGRATION QUESTIONS.)  
BASICALLY THE FOREIGN OFFICE PROPOSAL WOULD ADMINISTRA-  
TIVELY ALTER EXISTING PASSPORT REGULATIONS TO PERMIT  
ISSUANCE OF A GERMAN PASSPORT TO ANY RESIDENT OF A

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FORMER GERMAN COLONY WHO CAN DEMONSTRATE THAT EITHER HE OR HIS PARENTS WERE BORN IN GERMANY. BY LIMITING THE CHANGE TO FORMER GERMAN COLONIES, THE FOREIGN OFFICE HOPES TO PRECLUDE SETTING THE PRECEDENTS THAT ETHNIC GERMANS LIVING IN OTHER THIRD COUNTRIES CAN CLAIM AUTOMATIC SANCTUARY IN GERMANY IN TIMES OF STRIFE. SIMILARLY, EXTENDING CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS TO RETURNEES FROM NAMIBIA FINESSES THE REFUGEE ISSUE, SINCE AS DOCUMENTED CITIZENS THEY RETURN WITH FULL RIGHTS TO THE BENEFITS OF THE FRG'S LIBERAL SOCIAL PROGRAMS

6. THE FOREIGN OFFICE HOPES TO HAVE APPROVAL FROM ALL THE LAENDER WITHIN THE NEXT 4-6 WEEKS. THE REVISED PROCEDURES COULD THEN GO INTO EFFECT IMMEDIATELY. NO OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE CHANGE IS PLANNED. INSTEAD, THE FRG HOPES TO BEGIN MAKING CONCERNED NAMIBIA RESIDENTS AWARE OF THEIR NEW OPTION IN A LOW-KEY MANNER THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF ITS MISSION IN CAPE TOWN AND ITS CONSULAR AGENTS IN WINDHOEK (THE LAW FIRM LORENZ AND BONE.)

7. FOR INTERNAL PURPOSES, THE FOREIGN OFFICE IS GUESSING THAT NO MORE THAN 5,000 PEOPLE WILL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE AMENDED PASSPORT REGULATIONS AND ACTUALLY COME TO THE FRG. OUR CONTACTS, INCLUDING THE LAST FRG CONSUL IN WINDHOEK, BELIEVE THE TOTAL WILL ACTUALLY BE MUCH LESS. IN ANY CASE, ANY NUMBER OF NEWCOMERS FROM NAMIBIA WILL CERTAINLY HAVE A MUCH SMALLER IMPACT ON GERMAN SOCIETY THAN THE APPROXIMATELY 50,000 ETHNIC GERMANS WHO EMIGRATED TO THE FRG FROM EASTERN EUROPE LAST YEAR.

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8. COMMENT: OUR FOREIGN OFFICE CONTACTS ARE QUITE CANDID WHEN THEY TELL US THIS CHANGE IN PASSPORT REGULATIONS WAS NECESSITATED BY DOMESTIC POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS. THEREFORE, WE DO NOT SEE THIS AS IMPLYING A REDUCTION IN ANY WAY OF THE FRG'S COMMITMENT TO THE CONTACT GROUP'S WORK TOWARD A PEACEFUL SOLUTION. THE FRG WILL CERTAINLY CONTINUE ITS COOPERATION WITH ITS WESTERN PARTNERS AND, IN FACT, MAY FIND ITS FLEXIBILITY INCREASED, HAVING FULFILLED ITS PERCEIVED MORAL OBLIGA-

TIONS AND HAVING AT LEAST PARTIALLY MET THE DEMANDS OF  
INTERNAL CRITICS.  
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